



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
BEAUMONT DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

HORACE HICKMAN

§
§
§
§
§

CASE NO. 1:08-CR-29

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATION ON PLEA OF TRUE
BEFORE THE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b) and the Local Rules for the District Court, Eastern District of Texas, the District Court referred this matter for hearing and the submission of findings of fact and a report and recommendation pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §§ 3401(i) and 3583(e). The United States alleges that Defendant, Horace Hickman, violated conditions of supervised release imposed by United States District Judge Marcia A. Crone. The United States Probation Office filed its *Petition for Warrant or Summons for Offender Under Supervision* requesting the revocation of the defendant's supervised release.

The Court conducted a hearing on June 30, 2015, in accordance with Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure 11, 32 and 32.1. Defendant was present and represented by counsel at the hearing. Having heard the evidence, this court factually finds that the defendant has

violated conditions of supervision and recommends that such violation warrants the revocation of his supervised release.

After conducting the proceeding in the form and manner prescribed by Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11, the Court finds:

a. That Defendant, after consultation with counsel of record, has knowingly, freely and voluntarily consented to the administration of the plea of true in this cause by a United States Magistrate Judge subject to a final approval and imposition of sentence by the District Court.

b. That Defendant is fully competent and capable of entering an informed plea, that Defendant is aware of the nature of the charges and the consequences of the plea, that his plea of true is a knowing and voluntary plea, not the result of force or threats, and that the plea is supported by an independent evidentiary basis in fact establishing each of the essential elements of the conduct.

STATEMENT OF REASONS

A. Procedural History

On October 7, 2008, The Honorable Marcia A. Crone of the Eastern District of Texas sentenced Horace Hickman after he pled guilty to the offense of possession with intent to distribute 5 grams or more but less than 50 grams of cocaine base, a Class B felony. Judge Crone sentenced the defendant to 87 months imprisonment followed by 4 years supervised release, subject to the standard conditions of release, plus special conditions to financial

disclosure and drug aftercare.

On November 1, 2011, the Court entered a sentence reduction which reduced the imprisonment term to 60 months. On June 28, 2012, Horace Hickman completed his term of imprisonment and began service of the supervision term.

B. Allegations in Petition

The United States alleges that the defendant violated the following standard condition of supervised release:

The defendant shall notify the probation officer within 72 hours of being arrested or questioned by a law enforcement agency.

Specifically, Horace Hickman failed to contact the U.S. Probation Office about his contact with the Port Arthur Police Department on April 23, 2015.

C. Evidence presented at Hearing:

At the hearing, the Government offered the following evidence as its factual basis for the allegations set out *supra*. The Government proffered testimony establishing that on April 23, 2015, Horace Hickman was questioned by the Port Arthur Police Department but as of the date the petition was filed, he had failed to notify the U.S. Probation Office of this incident with law enforcement.

Horace Hickman agreed with the evidence presented and offered a plea of true to the allegation that he failed to notify his probation officer about his encounter with law enforcement.

D. Sentencing Guidelines; Findings and Recommended Disposition

The allegations, supporting evidence and plea of true warrant revocation of supervised release. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3583(e)(3). The Court factually finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant violated a standard condition of his supervised release by failing to notify his probation officer of his contact with law enforcement.

If the Court finds that Mr. Hickman violated his supervision conditions in the manner stated above, this will constitute a Grade C violation under U.S.S.G. § 7B1.1(a). Upon finding a Grade C violation, the Court may revoke the defendant's supervised release. *See* U.S.S.G. § 7B1.3(a)(2). Based upon the defendant's criminal history category of IV and the Grade C violation, the Sentencing Guidelines suggest a sentence of imprisonment for a period ranging from 6 to 12 months. *See* U.S.S.G. § 7B1.4(a). Because the offense of conviction in this case was a Class B felony, the statutory maximum imprisonment term upon revocation is three years. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3583(e)(3).

The Fifth Circuit states that Chapter 7 of the Sentencing Guidelines regarding the revocation of supervised release is advisory only. *See United States v. Cade*, 279 F.3d 265, 271 n.2 (5th Cir. 2002) (citing *United States v. Montez*, 952 F.2d 854, 859 (5th Cir. 1992); *United States v. Headrick*, 963 F.2d 777, 782 (5th Cir. 1992)). Because Chapter 7 was promulgated as an advisory policy statement and there are no applicable guidelines for

sentencing after revocation of supervised release¹, the Court may impose a greater or lesser sentence upon revocation. *United States v. Gonzalez*, 250 F.3d 923, 925 (5th Cir. 2001). Further, a sentence imposed for revocation will be upheld unless it is in violation of the law or plainly unreasonable. *Id.* See also *United States v. Pena*, 125 F.3d 285, 288 (5th Cir. 1997) (citations omitted).

Here, the evidence and the defendant's own admission supports a finding that the defendant failed to notify his probation officer of his contact with law enforcement in violation of his supervision conditions. Mr. Hickman voluntarily pled true, agreed with the Court's recommended sentence for that violation, and waived his right to allocute before the District Court. See *Consent to Revocation of Supervised Release and Waiver of Right to Be Present and Speak at Sentencing* (doc. #53).

Accordingly, based upon the defendant's plea of true, the agreement of the parties, and the evidence presented in this case, the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge recommends that the District Court accept the plea of true and revoke Defendant's supervised release. The undersigned magistrate judge further recommends that the District Court order Defendant to serve a term of **seven (7) months imprisonment** for the revocation, with no additional term of supervision to follow upon his release.

OBJECTIONS

Objections must be: (1) specific, (2) in writing, and (3) served and filed within

¹ See *U.S. Sentencing Guidelines Manual*, Ch. 7, pt. A, cmt. 1 ("At this time, the Commission has chosen to promulgate policy statements only.")

fourteen (14) days after being served with a copy of this report. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). A party's failure to object bars that party from: (1) entitlement to *de novo* review by a district judge of proposed findings and recommendations, *see Rodriguez v. Bowen*, 857 F.2d 275, 276-77 (5th Cir. 1988), and (2) appellate review, except on grounds of plain error of unobjected-to factual findings and legal conclusions accepted by the district court, *see Douglass v. United Servs. Auto. Ass'n.*, 79 F.3d 1415, 1417 (5th Cir. 1996) (en banc). The constitutional safeguards afforded by Congress and the courts require that, when a party takes advantage of his right to object to a magistrate's findings or recommendation, a district judge must exercise its nondelegable authority by considering the actual evidence and not merely by reviewing and blindly adopting the magistrate judge's report and recommendation. *See Hernandez v. Estelle*, 711 F.2d 619, 620 (5th Cir. 1983); *United States v. Elsoffer*, 644 F.2d 357, 359 (5th Cir. 1981) (per curiam).

SIGNED this the 30th day of June, 2015.



KEITH F. GIBLIN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE